

HOUSTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Title: Houston Community Council Meeting

Ref: HCC/18/11/2020

Location: Virtual meeting using Zoom

Date: 18/11/20

Time: 7:30pm

Sheet: 1 of 6

Present

Nigel Hobbs (nh)
David Dunlop (dd)
Jake Fulton (jf)
John Chambers (jc)
Kathy McFall (km)
Ian Andrew (ia)
Graeme Richardson (gr)
Bill Haddow (bh)
Harry Manley (hm)

Representing

Houston Community Council
Houston Community Council
Houston Community Council
Houston Community Council
Houston Community Council
Houston Community Council
Houston Community Council
Houston Community Council
Houston Community Council
Minutes Secretary

Ex-Officio

Representing

In Attendance

Colin Johnson (cj)
Andrew(a)
Mark (m)

Representing

Gryffe High School
Gryffe High School
Gryffe High School

Apologies

Debbie Hobbs
Sharon Chambers
John McEvoy
Carol Murray
Gordon Wright
Janet Mason

Representing

Houston Community Council
Houston Community Council
Houston Community Council
Houston Community Council
Houston Community Council
Houston Community Council

Distribution: HCC members and uploaded onto HCC website and issued to Renfrewshire Council.

Minutes taken by: Harry Manley

1) **Previous Minutes** Noted. Approved by Ian Andrew and David Dunlop

2) **Police Report**

Police Officer reported for 16/9/20 to 21/10/20 the following incidents:

- Theft (1 bicycle)
- Robbery (1 mobile [recovered])
- Serious Assault (1 at house)
- Common Assault (1 in street)
- Drug Offences (1 possession)
- Road Traffic Offences (1 careless driving)

3) **School Update**

Colin Johnson, Andrew, and Mark were representing Gryffe High School. Andrew and Mark are both on the Pupil Management Team. Andrew started off by giving an update from the School Captains, Calum and Rachel, they have been updating Pupil management screens around the School and in the Library which provide information to pupils about everything that is happening in the school and what the various Committees are doing, and they helped at the recent House event. They have also started to work on the leaver's hoodies and are continuing to plan their Snowball which they do not believe is going to happen, but are planning it just in case. Pupil Voice ran a survey for all pupils which has been finished and the first draft of the new one-way system has been given to Mr Johnson. The Charities Committee have been selling lots of poppies going around all the classes in the School. They also created a full plan for a presentation for Men's Mental Health Day which will be shown to all S1 and S2 PSE classes, Mrs Costello who is the head of Wellbeing has created a 16-minute video to go along with the presentation. Gregor and Ian who are part of the Charities Committee will sit in at the back of the classroom to get feedback from all the pupils for next time. Additionally, all staff will be running a Tombola to raise money for the charity Young Minds. The Achievements Committee have a new noticeboard in the School to show off all the Saltire achievements for all Pupils, last week's achiever of the month was Ian Mill for doing 90 hours of volunteering. The Citizenship Committee have counted all the money raised from their Global Diversity Month stall and they have raised £123 which is going to the charity Show Racism the Red Card. The Eco Committee are having their S6 management meeting to discuss their new roles, they have achieved their 3rd Eco Flag and are currently the only High School in Renfrewshire which has any Eco Flags. Their application for the flag is going to be used as a template for all other schools in Scotland to use. Furthermore, they have been speaking with both Primary Schools to see how they can organise events to help one another and the environment. They have started a new project which will be taking place over the next month which involves gathering old crisp packets and turning them into blankets for the homeless, additionally, they have started their application to get a vending machine that allows you to hand in old bottles and cans and then provides you with a receipt for money. Finally, they had their vegetarian week which was sponsored by the local Co-op and featured a vegetarian smoothie stall.

Mark then spoke about the Wellbeing Committee, they went to the Renfrewshire Funds Award Ceremony and were granted money for their 'Find Your Angel' project. They have been speaking to Mr Vannet about producing internet safety video and presentation which they will deliver to S1's parents digitally through Show My Homework or Microsoft Teams. A display has been made for Anti-

Bullying Week which details the protected characteristics and will be going up in stages over the course of next week. They are also holding a stall on Thursday and Friday for the Young Minds charity. The Communities Committee are focusing on their litter picking for the next few weeks as they have been forced to work on a reduced timetable due to members being forced to self-isolate, furthermore, they are brainstorming and are in the early stages of planning a Christmas appeal for the elderly in the community, they hope to roll it out before the end of term. The house captains reported that a house event took place last week with a very good turn out from pupils and from the Gryffe Gorilla, their new mascot, £450 has been raised for the house funds from own clothes day and the house event. They also had had a meeting to discuss and evaluate the house event. They held a foodbank collection competition to raise house points and food donations for the foodbank, the five house captains went with Mr Findlay to deliver the donations to the foodbank along with food collected by the Church.

Colin Johnson mentioned that the vending machine that Andrew referred to stemmed from the Houston Community Council, the application has already been submitted. CJ mentioned that he felt for the pupils as they now must wear masks coming into the building, when they walk about the corridors, and the upper school have to keep them on when in class. He mentioned that the pupils have been outstanding as they are doing all that they ask of them. He said that nothing has happened in the School in relation to COVID-19, they have had some positive cases, but they know exactly where they have come from and are on top of it. He mentioned that there was a batch of pupils in 5th Year who were self-isolating but are now back in school, he said that one case of COVID-19 can result in up to 35 pupils being asked to self-isolate as it does not matter about masks when it comes to self-isolating, it depends on how close one pupil was to the infected student. Of all the pupils forced to self-isolate, none of them have tested positive. He informed those present that the School managed to have a small spell of two weeks where clubs were allowed to run, however it must stop on Friday as Renfrewshire goes into level 4. He said that a few weeks ago the School got the UNICEF Gold Rights Respecting School award, they are the first secondary school in Renfrewshire to receive it and not many schools in Scotland have it. CJ mentioned that a few of the students that were forced to self-isolate were part of the litter picking team and as a result their effectiveness was decreased for a while, but they are back to full strength now and so full service will be resumed.

DD congratulated the School on their Eco Flag and suggested that it would be a good idea if they were to plant a tree at the end of each year to try and offset the carbon produced by students throughout the Year. Andrew said it was a great idea and would report it to the Eco Committee. JF suggested an area along the road entering Houston, where there is lots of spare grass, to plant the trees. Andrew agreed and said they would look at many different areas. NH mentioned that there are lots of grants and funding available for tree-planting and so the initiative should not cost any money.

KH asked if the vending machine would be available for the Community to use down the line. CJ answered saying that he hoped it would be.

4) Councillors' Reports

The report from Councillor Audrey Doig is as follows:

As a little girl approaching Christmas, which is more decades ago now that I care to mention, we were always guaranteed thick flurries of snow every January or February. You do not need to have a PhD in astrophysics to know that this is no longer the case, and that our winters are now much more mild and wet rather than dry and cold. Climate Change is sadly well and truly with us, and

Renfrewshire Council now has a new Climate Change Fund which is looking to give money to projects in communities to promote carbon neutral targets, if any community groups in Houston want to apply please e mail me on cllr.audrey.doig@renfrewshire.gov.uk

At the 2018 Council budget the current administration realised that for many decades in Renfrewshire the bulk of investment had always gone to the three towns, Paisley, Johnstone, and Renfrew, and that our village communities like Houston, despite paying a higher rate of council tax, were being left behind. Therefore, the Village Investment Fund was established for community groups in the villages to apply to and deliver crucial village investment. The fund is still undersubscribed, so I am appealing to all community groups to consider putting forward an application to ensure Houston gets its fair share of this key seedcorn funding.

2020 has been a very difficult year for us all, and we perhaps have still to go through the eye of the storm before we come out the other side. But I am very pleased that by this time next year the new Houston to Bridge of Weir cycle path should be open and be of great benefit to the community. I would like to wish a very Happy Christmas and a Good New Year to all CC members, of all faiths and none. 2021 can only be an improvement

No other Councillors were present or submitted reports

5) Treasurer's Report

JC tabled an update on income and expenditure for the previous month. A copy of this is available on request.

6) Chairman's Report

1. Firstly, to let you know that Pauline Purcell has resigned from the Community Council. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Pauline for her contribution.
2. The Villages Local Partnership grant offer of £2,555 for Christmas lighting has been received, all paperwork has been completed and returned. Payment should be received by month end.
3. As you are aware, the Scottish Government's department for planning had asked for our views on the response given by Renfrewshire Council on their recent information request relating to proposed local development plan (discussed at our October meeting). David formulated an excellent response that we submitted.
4. This week Renfrewshire Council have sent out a questionnaire asking for our opinion on housing priorities for the next 5 years. We will discuss our response under AOCB at the end of tonight's meeting.
5. I have received an email inviting Community Council elected members to free online training on 'The Circular Economy and The Planning System'. These training events are to help participants to understand how the planning system works, in particular how to be engaged and involved in shaping decision-making. It will also provide an introduction to the circular economy as Scotland moves towards its zero carbon target by 2045. The training will take place at dates tbc in January/February 2021. If anyone is interested in registering for the training let me know and I will forward on the email.

6. Renfrewshire Council updates for this month:

- a. Confirmation has been received at long last that the repairs on the roundabout (near the Co-op) to signage and illuminated bollards are imminent. Although for health and safety reasons the council have declined our request to plant bulbs and shrubbery on the roundabout.
- b. A pot hole reported on the pavement in Houston Road and bay marking for the electric charging points in the Bogstonhill Road car park have both been confirmed as being actioned.
- c. Renfrewshire Council is still not prepared to conduct a 'walkabout' of the village to identify potential sites for tree planting, additional beds etc, so they have suggested we provide a map identifying areas that Bee Happy are interested in.

I'm still chasing for updates on:

- a. Walking access through Gryffe Manor Nursery.
- b. Slow sign to be painted on the road before the bend on Houston Road before the left turn on to Manse Crescent.

7) Action Log

NH took the group through the Action Log which will be updated for the next meeting

Action 106.0 - Restoration of metal bridge, action now overdue. No update from Taylor Wimpey or Cllr Kerr, NH to follow up.

All other actions were progressing successfully.

8) Christmas Light Update

MA sent out an update to all members prior to the meeting.

NH mentioned that the security of the projector was vital as it was not able to be insured. JC suggested we wait for the projector to arrive and then look at the best of way of keeping it secure

9) Connecting Houston Update

DD informed those present that Peter Leslie has shared links to eleven submissions for consultants who have expressed an interest in doing the research for the project. Peter is looking for feedback on the submissions. NH asked if anyone present had started looking at the submissions. JC has looked at a handful of them and mentioned that something we have not considered for the scoring is somebody who we could go forward with, to design. He mentioned that some of the consultants were landscape architects who would not be able to assist us past the early stages of the project and so we would be forced to look for other consultants later on, whereas some of the others would be able to carry out the full design. He said that going with the latter would save money and make the project a lot easier.

10) A.O.C.B.

DD will fill out a questionnaire on Renfrewshire Council Housing plan on behalf of Houston Community Council. He shared some key issues that would be raised.

- LDP / reporter, drive from developers for upper end 4/5 bedroom car oriented properties – provision else where in R

- Methodology potentially flawed in terms of populations and demographics for our area, neglecting needs of the older generations in Houston.
- We would like a more balanced approach covering cross generational needs.
- The focus should be based on the people need rather than developer need.
- We should strive for more unique and higher bespoke design standards, more reflective of our village character.
- Expected downturn in industry post-COVID – need to complete existing developments such as Dargavel.
- We would encourage development of brownfield sites and town centres, developing on greenbelt only as a last resort.
- Sustainable sites – near train and bus routes (less car-based approach).
- Consider biodiversity and planting options on existing greenbelt to enhance village

All present were in support of his responses.

BH informed those present that there was watering gathering at the bottom of Magnus Road near the Crosslee Bridge, the water appears to be seeping out from the nearby field, he asked if there was any other pressure we could put on Renfrewshire Council to fix the problem. He said it was the 3rd time this year that he has attempted to get Renfrewshire Council to come and fix the issue, he mentioned that with the coming winter ice could be a major concern. JC asked BH if Renfrewshire Council had told him why they have not done anything to solve the problem, as if the water is coming from the field it could be the landowner's responsibility, however Renfrewshire Council could put pressure on them to fix it. NH will send an email to Renfrewshire Council to report the issue.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Date of next meeting: 20th January 2021.